



SIERRA CLUB

Connecticut Chapter
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Dear Committee on Planning and Development, Senator Cassano, Representative McCarthy, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Sierra Club and our more than 40,000 members and supporters in Connecticut, thank you for the opportunity to testify on:

HB 6106

“An act concerning the property tax exemption for certain renewable energy resources and non-residential hydropower facilities.”

I offer this testimony from two perspectives: first as a member of the Connecticut Chapter of the Sierra Club’s Executive Committee and Chair of its Legislative Committee; and second as a solar industry professional offering commercial, industrial, nonprofit, and residential solar arrays in Connecticut.

Tax exemptions and other financial incentives have played an extremely important role in the development of distributed renewable energy generation driving dramatic growth particularly over the past decade. Property tax abatement for class one renewable energy has played an important role in ensuring that solar energy is within the financial reach of Connecticut citizens.

However, it is critical to recognize that: 1) a residential or commercial investment solar energy has a life expectancy in excess of 30 years, and; 2) the transition of our power grid to renewable energy will increase the need for distributed energy generation over the next several decades. In particular, widespread conversion to heat pumps, electric vehicles and electrified industrial processes can be expected to require additional distributed generation at parcels with solar energy.

As currently drafted, HB 6106 Section 1. (A) and (D) each would provide a tax abatement only to the extent that the electricity provided by on site solar (for example) “***does not exceed the estimated annual load for the location where such source or facility is located***”. This creates a conundrum in which property owners converting to solar are bound by their historical, fossil fuel dominated electrical needs instead of their projected future electrical requirements in a state-wide environment focused on increasing electrification.

I suggest that HB 6106 be modified to allow residential and commercial property owners to qualify for the tax exemption even if their solar array produces electricity by a certain margin, perhaps 120%, to allow for future electrification such as EVs, battery storage, heat pumps, and industrial processes. Subsection (A), (D) and (E) should be modified to allow owners to qualify for the property tax exemption

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as long as their solar array “**does not exceed 120% of the estimated annual load for the location where such source or facility is located**”.

Distributed renewable generation of electricity is Connecticut’s future. HB 6106 should be designed to account for the electricity use of the future, not be bound by the electricity use of the past.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,

Arthur Helmus
Executive Committee
Sierra Club Connecticut

[\(See article: A Shocker in the Plan to Finally Update Residential Solar \)](#)